

CONAN THE  
BARBARIAN

25¢

©

10  
OCT

02498

THE MOST SAVAGE HERO OF ALL!

APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
AUTHORITY

# CONAN

## THE BARBARIAN

ALL  
NEW  
STORIES

MARVEL  
COMICS  
GROUP

BEWARE  
THE  
WRATH  
OF THE

BULL-  
GOD!

BONUS!

BEFORE THERE WAS CONAN, THERE WAS...

# KULL THE CONQUEROR!



# CONAN THE BARBARIAN!™

## BEWARE THE WRATH OF ANU!

THE SUN AND THE GATE—BARS GO DOWN TOGETHER IN THIS GREAT CORINTHIAN CITY— BUT, ON OCCASION, A LAST-MINUTE WAYFARER OR TWO CAN CAUSE A HITCH IN THE SCHEDULE—

WELL? SPEAK UP, MAN! WHY SHOULD WE LET YOU ENTER THE CITY?

I HAVE TOLD YOU. I'M A TRAPPER— A TRADER OF THESE ANIMAL FURS.

AND THE GIRL IS— WITH ME.

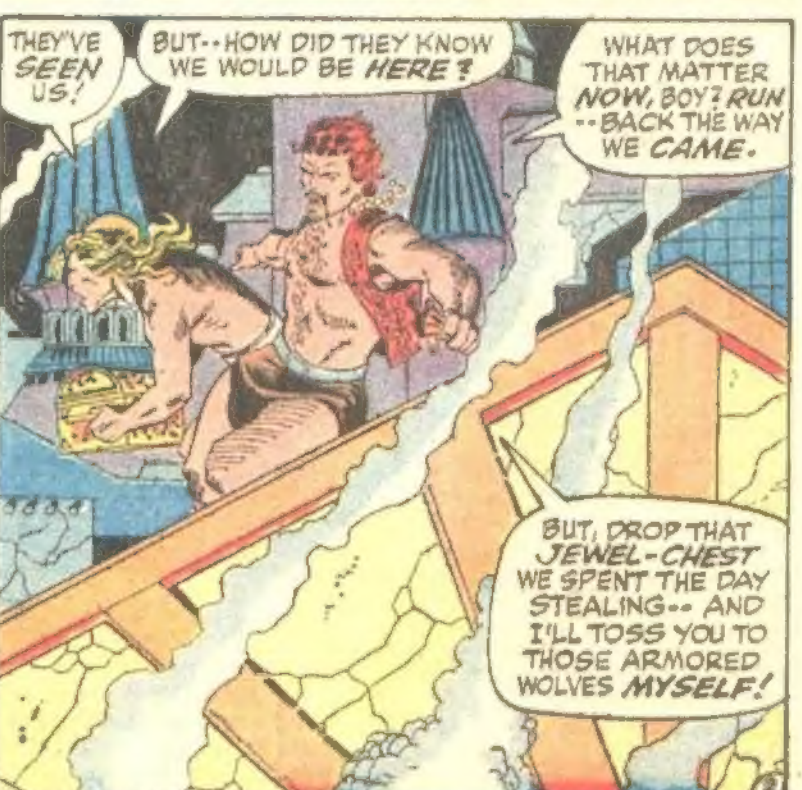
IF YOU'RE A TRAPPER, I'M THE RED PRIEST'S NEPHEW.

ANOTHER PAIR OF THIEVES, MORE LIKELY!

STAN LEE,  
EDITOR  
ROY THOMAS  
WRITER  
BARRY SMITH,  
SAL ARTIST  
BUSCEMA, • ROSEN,  
INKER LETTERER

BASED ON THE  
HERO CREATED  
BY  
ROBERT E.  
HOWARD







THEY'RE **CONFUSED**,  
CAP'N-- THE BIG ONE  
HAS **PAUSED**-- AND  
HE'S SILHOUETTED  
AGAINST THE **MOON**.

I'VE GOT A CLEAR  
SHOT AT HIS  
THIEVING  
**HEART!**

AND I'VE  
GOT A  
CLEAR  
SHOT,  
DOG--

--AT YOUR  
CRAVEN  
JACKAL'S  
TAIL!

NO MAN STRIKES ONE  
OF THE RED PRIEST'S  
OWN ARCHERS-- AND  
LIVES!

HELP ME, ALL  
OF YOU! HE FIGHTS  
LIKE **TEN CIVILIZED**  
MEN.

HO, LITTLE ONE--THERE'S  
RARE GOOD **SPORT** FOR  
THE WATCHING, DOWN  
THERE.

THE CITY'S FINEST  
HAVE TURNED ON THE  
SAVAGE WHO TRIED  
TO HELP US.

HOLD HIM **STILL**, FOOLS!  
THIS IS ONE TASK I MY-  
SELF WILL PERFORM  
WITH **RELISH!**

OH, GODS IN  
THE HEAVENS...

**STOP THEM!**  
**STOP THEM!**

I'M NO  
BRITTLE  
BRASS  
GOD,  
WENCH--

BUT WILL  
THIS  
BRICK  
HELP?

THEN  
LET  
HIM HELP  
US-- BY HIS  
**DEATH.**

COME ON!  
THIS IS OUR  
CHANCE TO  
**ESCAPE!**



NOR DOES THE MIGHTY-THEWED CIMMERIAN NEED MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT TO ADD TO THE CHAOS...

QUICKLY, CONAN--  
WHILE YOU'RE FREE--  
LET'S FLEE THIS  
CITY...

NO,  
JENNA--

WE'VE STARVED  
ON THE ROAD OF  
KINGS LONG  
ENOUGH.

THEY'LL  
CARRY ME  
OUT OF THIS  
CITY ON A  
SHIELD--  
OR NOT AT  
ALL.

I LIKE YOUR  
ATTITUDE,  
MY FRIEND.

COME  
WITH  
US.

BUT--  
THE  
GIRL--

TELL HER  
TO MEET US  
BEHIND  
THE TEMPLE  
OF ANU.

NOW  
HURRY  
--OR  
STAY  
HERE  
AND FEND  
FOR YOUR-  
SELF.

SHE  
HEARD  
YOU. SHE  
GOES...

-- AND SO  
SHALL WE.

NOT SO  
FAST, YOU  
TWO. I'M THE  
ONE WHO HAS  
TO CARRY THE  
BOOTY.

DOWN  
HERE...  
QUICKLY!

YOU SCALE WALLS  
LIKE A MONKEY,  
BARBARIAN.

IN MY  
HOMELAND,  
YOU SCALE THEM  
SWIFTLY...

THIS  
WAY!

THE  
GUARDSMEN  
WILL NOT  
DARE FOLLOW  
US ONCE WE'VE  
CLIMBED  
THESE STEPS.

--OR YOU  
NEVER  
LIVE TO  
REACH THE  
TOP.





LOOK, CAPTAIN. THEY'RE BEFORE THE TEMPLE OF ANU.

BUT NOT YET INSIDE IT, SCUM.

I WANT THOSE ARCHERS UP HERE--AT ONCE!

**BOWMEN!**

TO THE FORE --IF YOU VALUE YOUR HIDES!



WHICH ONE SHALL I AIM FOR FIRST, SIR?

AM I SURROUNDED BY JESTERS?

THE ONE WITH THE MONEY, FOOL.

NOW FIRE!



**YAAARRR**



BLAST YOU! DID YOU HAVE TO DROP THE CHEST?



WELL, THERE'S NO HELPING IT NOW!

STOP YOUR WHIMPERING. I'VE GOT YOU.



NOW, HAVE YOU FOUND AN UNLATCHED PORTAL--

--OR DO WE STAND HERE WHILE THOSE ARCHERS PERFECT THEIR CRAFT?

IN HERE-- WITHOUT DELAY.



THAT'S BETTER. BUT HOLD STILL, LAD.

THIS WILL HURT YOU MUCH WORSE THAN ME.



SHALL WE PURSUE THEM, CAPTAIN?

WOULD THAT WE COULD.

BUT THAT TEMPLE IS SACRED TO ANU--AND THUS TO THE RED PRIEST.

WE DARE NOT EVEN RETRIEVE THE COINS FROM THE STEPS.



BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT CONCERNS ME NOW.

I WANTED THAT MASTER THIEF'S SKIN.

INSTEAD, HE'S ADDED ANOTHER ROBBER TO HIS RANKS.

WELL, I'LL REPAY THIS NIGHT-- AND SOON.



THEN, THERE'LL BE THREE HEADS MOUNTED ON SPEARS AT THE CITY GATE!



EASY, IGON! WE ARE SAFE NOW.

IN CIMMERIA, WE'D THROW SUCH A WHIMPERER TO THE WOLVES, IF THEY'D HAVE HIM.

CIMMERIA? I ONCE KNEW A YOUTH FROM---

HOLY MITRA, CAN IT BE? DON'T YOU KNOW ME, LAD?

SHOULD I? WHAT KIND OF GAME--?

YES, BY CROM-- I DIDN'T KNOW YOU IN THE DARK. YOU'RE--- THE GUNDERMAN.

AYE-- BUT I THOUGHT YOU DIED AT LOST LANJAU.\*

I THOUGHT THE SAME OF YOU.

I HOPE YOUR SHARE OF OUR LOOTING LASTED LONGER THAN MINE.

LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO RETURN HERE-- AND FIND MY GIRL ALREADY WED.

SO I STAYED DRUNK FOR A MONTH--- AND THAT FINISHED THE GOLD.

BUT YOU, BARBARIAN--- WHAT HAPPENED TO--?

LOOK!

\*SEE ISSUE #8.--STAN.

GENTLY, MY CHILD, THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR FEAR.

I AM BUT YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT-- A PRIEST OF ANU-- WHOM THE GUNDERMAN KNOWS WELL.

AND WHAT HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME THIS NIGHT, MY FRIEND?

I SEE. WOULD ALL OF YOU STEP THIS WAY, PLEASE?

CAN YOU WALK ALONE, IGON?

NOTHING, PRIEST. WE DROPPED IT ALL MAKING OUR ESCAPE.

THIS IS OUR HOLY OF HOLIES!

AND THIS-- OUR SILVER SPIRAL, WHICH LEADS UPWARD TO THE VERY STARS THEMSELVES.

GUNDERMAN, YOU ARE A FOOL TO RISK YOUR LIFE FOR CASKS OF GOLD.

LOOT THIS PLACE, INSTEAD-- AND DIE IN A RICH MAN'S BED.

YES-- BUT IF HE CALLS ME CHILD AGAIN--



I TRUST, MY SON, THAT IS ONE OF YOUR BARBARIAN JESTS!

FOR, IF 'TIS NOT, YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN...



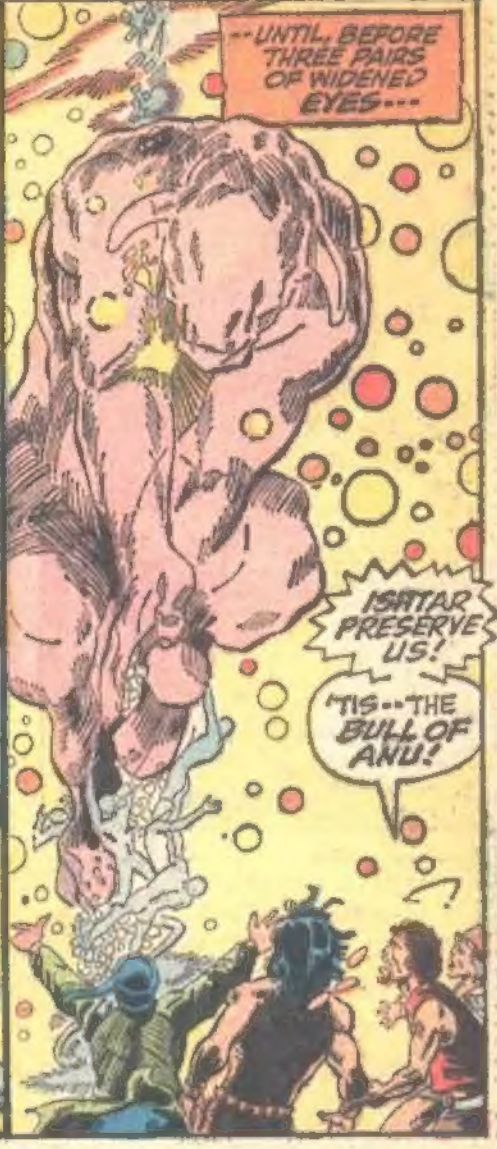
...AND HAPPY I SHALL BE TO TEACH YOU.



THEN, AS THE PRIEST LAYS HANDS UPON THE GLEAMING SPIRAL--AS HE MUTTERS A SPELL IN SOME ARCAINE TONGUE--CONAN STARTS--



FOR, THOSE GRAVEN GARGOYLES SEEM TO BE WRITHING--AS IF IN INVOCATION--



...UNTIL, BEFORE THREE PAIRS OF WIDENED EYES--

ISHTAR PRESERVE US!  
'TIS--THE BULL OF ANU!

AYE-- THE AVENGER WHOM THE GOD ANU SENDS, TO RIGHT WRONGS DONE HIM.

WOULD YOU?



WELL, SAVAGE? WOULD YOU STILL RISK ANU'S WRATH, BY LOOTING HIS TEMPLE?



I NEVER MEANT TO ROB A HOUSE OF THE GODS, PRIEST.

IT WAS, AS YOU SAID--A JEST.

BUT HOLY ONE--LOOK ABOVE YOU!

EH??



THE BULL-THING IS NO LONGER A WISPY WRAITH--





B-BY THE POWER WITH WHICH I CONJURED THEE-- BY THE GREAT ANU, WHO HATH SENT THEE--

--BUT NEARLY AS SOLID AS WE!



--I BID THEE NOW--  
**BEGONE!**



HE'S--  
**VANISHED!**



OF--OF COURSE. BUT NOW, SINCE WE SEEM TO HAVE NO BUSINESS TO TRANS--  
ACT THIS NIGHT--

I MUST ATTEND TO MY--  
**VESPERS!**

I'LL SHOW YOU TO THE  
**BACK GATE!**



--YOU'LL COME TO CALL AGAIN, I HOPE?

MY DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN!



YES--AS LONG AS WE BRING STOLEN GOLD!



JENNA. THEN YOU FOUND THIS BACK DOOR, AFTER ALL.



YES. THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY I BOTHERED.



AH, CIMMERIAN, YOU'VE BEEN HOLDING OUT ON ME. WHAT LOVELY VISION IS THIS?

HERE NAME IS JENNA. SHE'S WITH ME.



I'M SURE. JENNA-- THIS IS IGON, TO WHOM I'VE BEEN TEACHING THE NOBLE ART OF THIEVERY.



IGON-- THIS IS JENNA.



NOW, COME. THIS TEMPLE BORDERS THE MAZE, WHERE WE'LL NOT BE--  
**HARASSED.**

THAT FAT PRIEST, THEN-- HE ACTS AS A FENCE FOR STOLEN GOODS?



I CONSIDER IT AN OMEN THAT WE TWO MET AGAIN THIS WAY.

WHAT SAY WE MAKE A TEAM OF IT, YOU AND I?

SAY-- WHAT IS YOUR NAME, FRIEND? MINE IS BURGUN.

I AM CONAN--A CIMMERIAN, AS YOU KNOW.

AND I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER.



A GUNDERMAN **DESERTER** FROM THE MERCENARIES--- AND A BARBARIC **CIMMERIAN**. WE'LL MAKE THE MOST **DARING** TEAM OF THIEVES THIS CITY HAS EVER---

IGON IS TAKING ME FOR A FLAGON OF WINE, CONAN. ARE YOU--?

BURGUN AND I HAVE THINGS TO TALK ABOUT, GIRL. I'LL SEE YOU LATER.

PERHAPS YOU **WILL**... AND PERHAPS YOU **WON'T**!

YES... JENNA...

COME, Igon.

THE NEXT FEW NIGHTS ARE LONG AND DARK... AND EVENTFUL ONES FOR BURGUN AND HIS NEWFOUND PARTNER-IN-PLUNDER---

--AS A DIS-PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE CITY'S WEALTH FINDS ITS WAY INTO THE MURKY MAZE---

-- ALWAYS JUST BEFORE A GRIM-FACED CAPTAIN ARON ARRIVES UPON THE SCENE.

**HAH!** OUR SUCCESS MAKES ME **AMBITIOUS** FOR US BOTH, CONAN.

WHAT SAY WE PULL OFF A **REAL** THEFT TOMORROW NIGHT-- ONE THAT WILL MAKE THE WHOLE CITY SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE?

YOU NAME THE PLACE-- I'LL HELP YOU **ROB** IT.

GLAD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, LAD...

-- SINCE OUR NEXT VICTIM WILL BE-- **THE RED PRIEST HIMSELF!**





EMPTY, AS YOU PREDICTED. BUT WHO IS THIS MAN THEY CALL THE RED PRIEST?

NABONIDUS BY NAME-- THE REAL RULER OF THE CITY, DESPITE THE PUPPET KING WHO SITS THE THRONE.

THERE HE IS-- IN MARBLE, AT LEAST.

A FIERCE-LOOKING DEVIL-- BUT I'LL BET HIS BLOOD IS RED.

HOPEFULLY, YOU'LL NEVER FIND OUT-- FOR, THIS IS MERELY HIS OFFICIAL RESIDENCE, NOT HIS REAL ONE.

BY MITRA! HERE'S A KING'S RANSOM--- SURROUNDED BY GOLDEN SKULLS.

THE SKULLS OF OTHER, LESS SKILLFUL THIEVES, NO DOUBT.

BAH! THIS WHOLE PLACE STINKS OF SORCERY.

I'LL TAKE THIS DAGGER-BELT-- NOTHING ELSE.

BUT THAT'S NOT WORTH ANYTHING.

NO-- BUT MY LIFE IS.

A WELL-TIMED EXIT, AS IT TURNS OUT-- FOR, LATER THAT SELFSAME NIGHT---

GUARDSMEN-- TO ME!

-- SO, CAPTAIN ARON-- YOU HAVE CHARGE OF THE CITY'S GUARDS. YET CANNOT KEEP THE COURT OF THE RED PRIEST SAFE FROM THIEVERY.

IS THAT THE WAY OF IT?

NABONIDUS-- SIRE-- THEY WHO ROBBED YOU WERE DOUBTLESS THE TWO BOLDEST ROGUES IN THE CITY-- THEY--

SILENCE, KNAVE. YOU DARE MAKE EXCUSES TO NABONIDUS?

I WANT THOSE THIEVES CAPTURED-- AND HANGED-- BEFORE ANOTHER NIGHT HAS PASSED--

--OR ELSE YOU SHALL TAKE THEIR PLACE UPON THE GALLOWS.

DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?

PERFECTLY, SIRE.





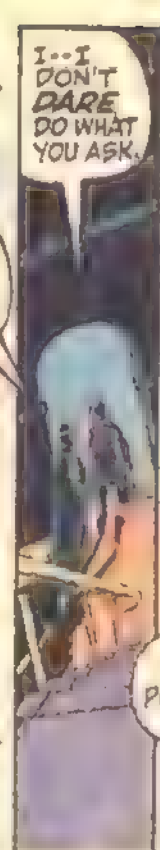
THEN BE OFF WITH YOU--ERE I TURN YOU INTO THE BEWHISKERED GUTTER-RAT YOU SO RESEMBLE!

Y-YES, HOLY ONE...



THUS, ERE DAWN...

BUT, MY GOOD MAN...



I--I DON'T DARE DO WHAT YOU ASK.



THE RED PRIEST DOES NOT ASK--HE DEMANDS.

YOU EXPECT THOSE TWO DOGS HERE AT ANY MOMENT, DO YOU NOT?

THERE --IS THAT POSSIBILITY, BUT...



THEN, YOU'LL HELP US SET A TRAP FOR THEM-- RIGHT NOW.

FOR, IF THEY'RE NOT CAUGHT, IT'S ZZZKKT. FOR BOTH OF US.

BUT-- THE RISK--

IF THE MAZE-DWELLERS EVER LEARN I AM BOTH FENCE AND INFORMER...



BESIDES, THE SACRED RULE OF TEMPLE SANCTUARY...

...IS ONE WHICH GREAT ANU WILL SURELY OVERLOOK, IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS LITTLE-- DONATION.

FOR NEW INCENSE-BURNERS, PERHAPS?

I THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. GO WITH ANU.

AND AS SILVER STREAKS OF MORNING STAB THE SKY...



SLOW DOWN, LAD. YOU'VE DONE NO STEALING THIS NIGHT.

BUT I'M HELPING YOU CARRY SEVERAL DAYS' LOOTING, AM I NOT?



STILL --THERE IS TOO MUCH SILENCE IN THIS PLACE.

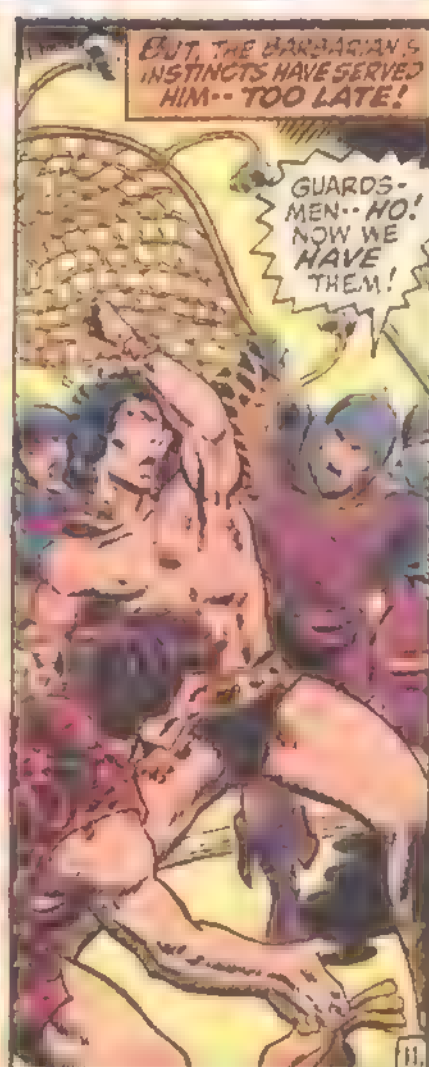
HOW CAN THERE BE TOO MUCH SILENCE IN A TEMPLE?

YOU'RE A JITTERY ONE, LAD. I DON'T...



BURGUN-- FLEE!

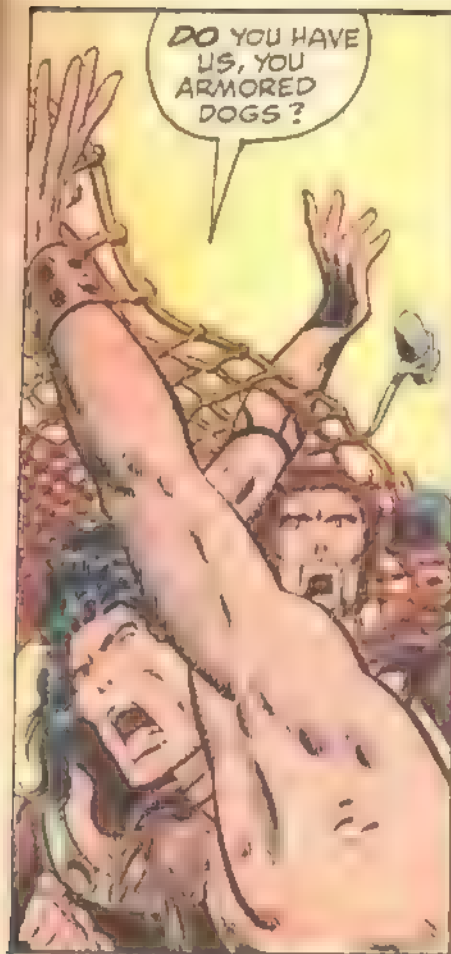
THERE IS TREACHERY HERE-- AND DEATH!



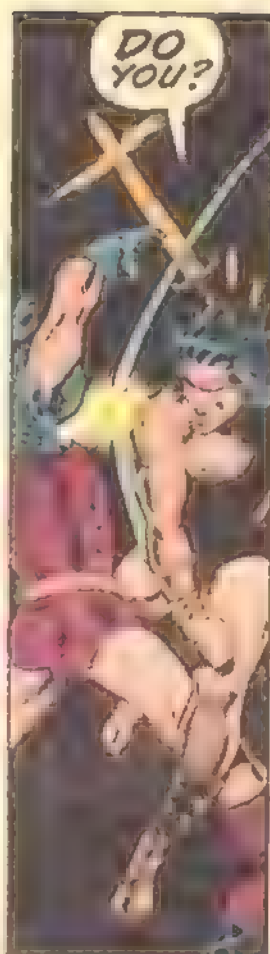
BUT, THE BARBARIAN'S INSTINCTS HAVE SERVED HIM-- TOO LATE!

GUARDS-- MEN-- NO! NOW WE HAVE THEM!





DO YOU HAVE  
US, YOU  
ARMORED  
DOGS?



DO  
YOU?



DO YOU??



THAT ONE  
FIGHTS LIKE  
A TIGER.



BUT, THIS  
ONE---

AARRAH!

THIS ONE,  
PIG, IS STILL  
A MATCH FOR  
THE LIKES  
OF YOU!



DON'T STOP  
FIGHTING.  
BURGUN!

AS SOON  
AS MY BLADE  
IS FREE, I'LL...

YOU'LL GET  
CAUGHT,  
LIKE ME--  
LIKE A RAT  
IN A TRAP.

FLEE,  
YOU FOOL--  
THERE'S  
NOTHING  
YOU CAN  
DO FOR  
ME NOW.

FLEE!



FOR AN ETERNAL, AGONIZING  
INSTANT YOUNG CONAN  
WEIGHS HIS CHANCES IN THE  
BALANCE OF HIS MIND--THEN--

YES...  
I GO...

BUT...  
I'LL BE  
BACK  
FOR YOU  
MAN.

I SWEAR  
IT-- BY THE  
BONES OF  
CROM!



THE DAY DAWNS DARK AND DISMAL, AS THE CIMMERIAN RETURNS TO THE STENCH-FILLED MAZE TAVERN CALLED THE RAT'S DEN... WHERE, IN DUE COURSE...

BACK FROM YOUR NIGHT'S WORK, CONAN? BUT-- WHAT'S WRONG?

WHERE'S THE GREAT BURGUN?

TAKEN IN AMBUSH-- BY THE CITY GUARD!

OH-- THAT'S AWFUL. HE BROUGHT ME SUCH PRETTY THINGS.

I'LL BRING YOU PRETTIER. HAH! AND HE WAS GOING TO TEACH US ALL THIEVING.

WELL, NOW HE CAN TRY STEALING HIS WAY OUT OF JAIL.

SHUT UP.

WHY? IT'LL BE A GREAT LAUGH, WHEN HE TRIES TO PICK THE HANG-MAN'S POCK--

I SAID-- SHUT UP!

UNASH!

HOW DARE YOU STRIKE HIM? HE'S DELICATE... SENSITIVE-- NOT LIKE YOU.

IF YOU'RE SO STRONG, WHY DON'T YOU GO RESCUE BURGUN?

I SHALL-- BUT THEY ALWAYS WAIT THREE DAYS BEFORE EXECUTING THIEVES.

DURING THAT TIME, I MUST THINK-- PLAN.

THEN, FEELING MORE ALONE THAN HE HAS FELT SINCE HE LEFT THE HILLS OF CIMMERIA, CONAN WANDERS INTO CROOKED, RAIN-SWEPT STREETS...

CONAN! CONAN!

LITTLE GORDA! I SENT YOU TO SPY ON THE GATES OF THE PALACE PRISON.

WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED-- UNLESS YOU HAVE NEWS?

I-- DO, CONAN. THEY'RE NOT WAITING THREE DAYS LIKE ALWAYS.

THEY'RE-- ANGRY BURGUN-- RIGHT NOW!

CROM'S DEVILS!

GONE NOW ALL THOUGHT OF PLANS-- ELABORATE SCHEMES OF DEERING-- DO--

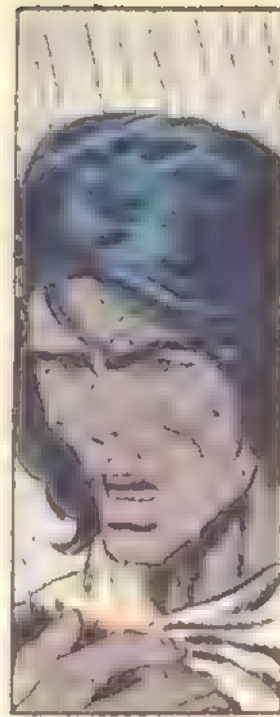
NOTHING NOW BUT THE UN-FAMILIAR TASTE OF FEAR, A BITTER DRYNESS IN THE MOUTH--

NOTHING SAVE THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE HAS-- FAILED.



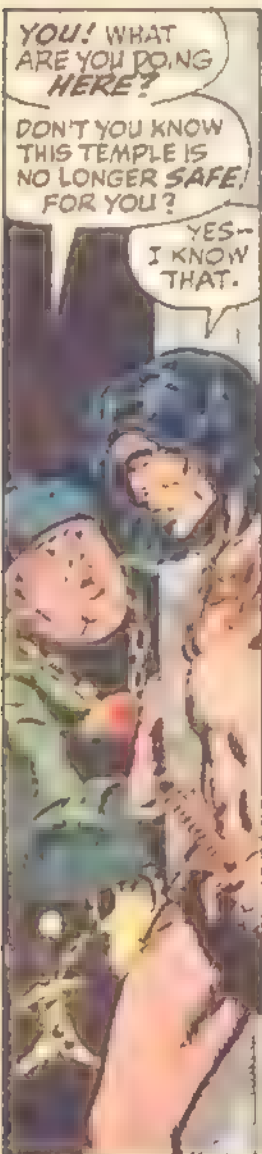






NIGHTFALL: AND NO SOLDIERS RING THE PROUD TEMPLE OF ANU-- FOR, WHO WOULD SUSPECT THAT THIEVES WOULD DO AUGHT BUT TREMBLE IN THE MAZE THIS NIGHT?

WHO WOULD THINK TO LOOK FOR A WOLFLIKE SHADOW BENEATH SO STAR-SPLASHED A SKY?



YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

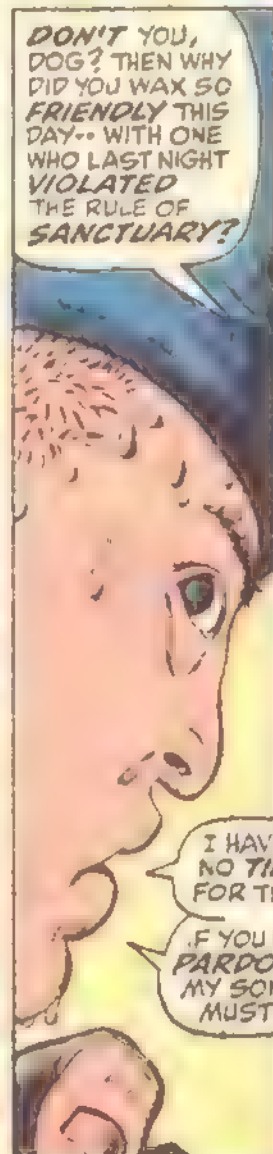
DON'T YOU KNOW THIS TEMPLE IS NO LONGER SAFE FOR YOU?

YES-- I KNOW THAT.



AND-- I KNOW WHY IT IS NOT.

I-- KNOW NOT WHAT YOU MEAN.



DON'T YOU, DOG? THEN WHY DID YOU WAX SO FRIENDLY THIS DAY-- WITH ONE WHO LAST NIGHT VIOLATED THE RULE OF SANCTUARY?

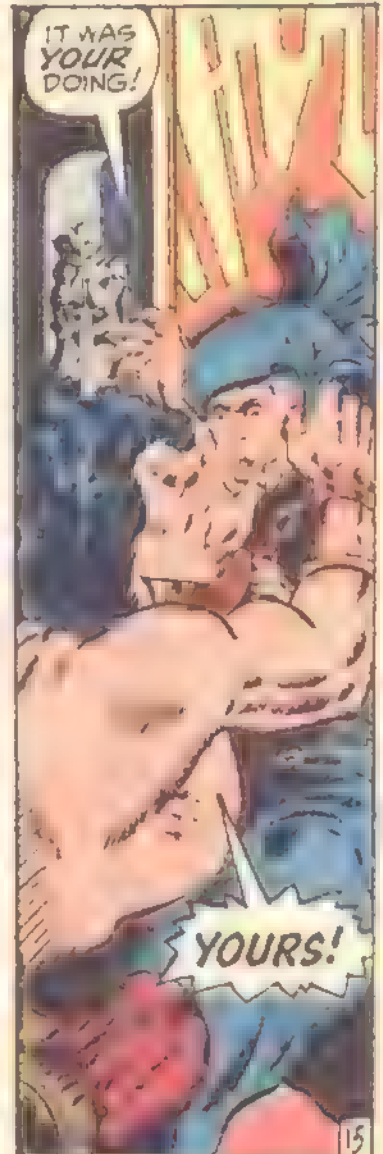
I HAVE-- NO TIME FOR THIS.

IF YOU WILL PARDON ME, MY SON, I MUST--



HOLD, YOU LOWEST OF MISBORN CURS!

IT WAS NOT THE GUARD ALONE THAT CAUSED MY COMRADE'S DEATH.



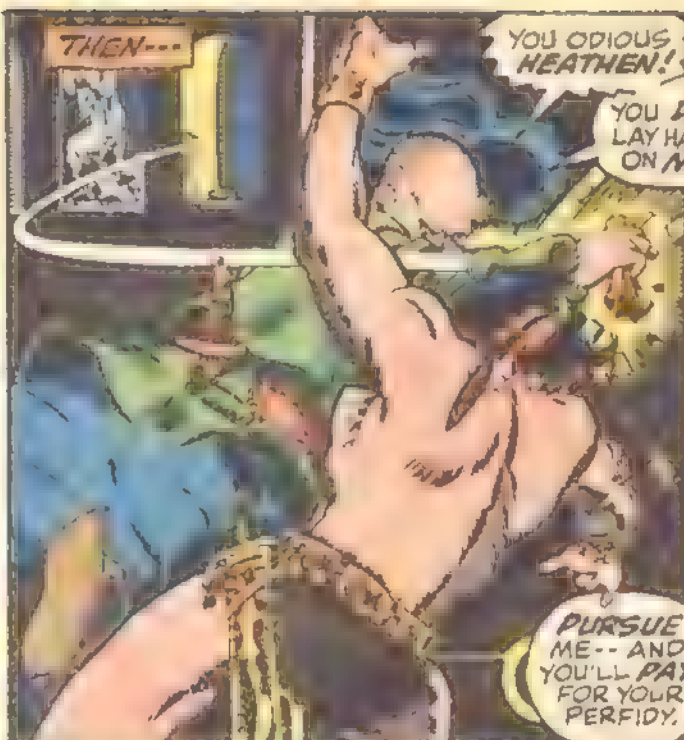
IT WAS YOUR DOING!

YOURS!





FLAREY  
FINGERS  
STAB FIT-  
FULLY BACK-  
WARD---



THEN---

YOU ODIOUS  
HEATHEN!

YOU DARE  
LAY HANDS  
ON ME?!

PURSU  
ME-- AND  
YOU'LL PAY  
FOR YOUR  
PERFIDY.



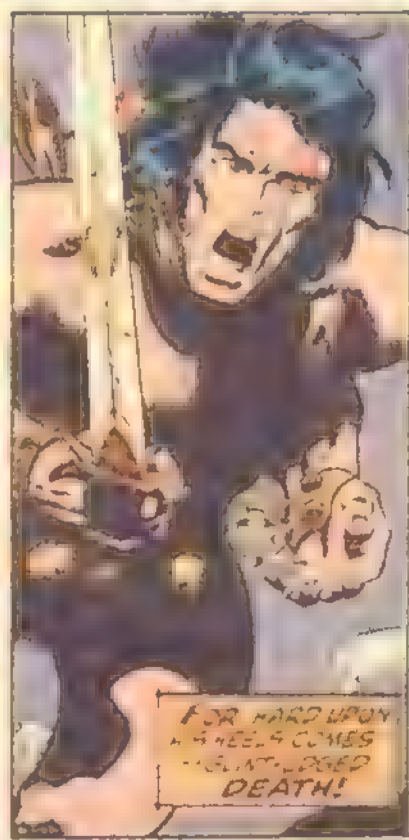
PRAYERS HAVE EVER BEEN A  
STRANGER TO THIS FULL-FED  
PREST---

BUT HE MOUTHS THEM NOW,  
AS HE STUMBLES CLUMSILY  
THRU LABYRINTHINE  
CORRIDORS---

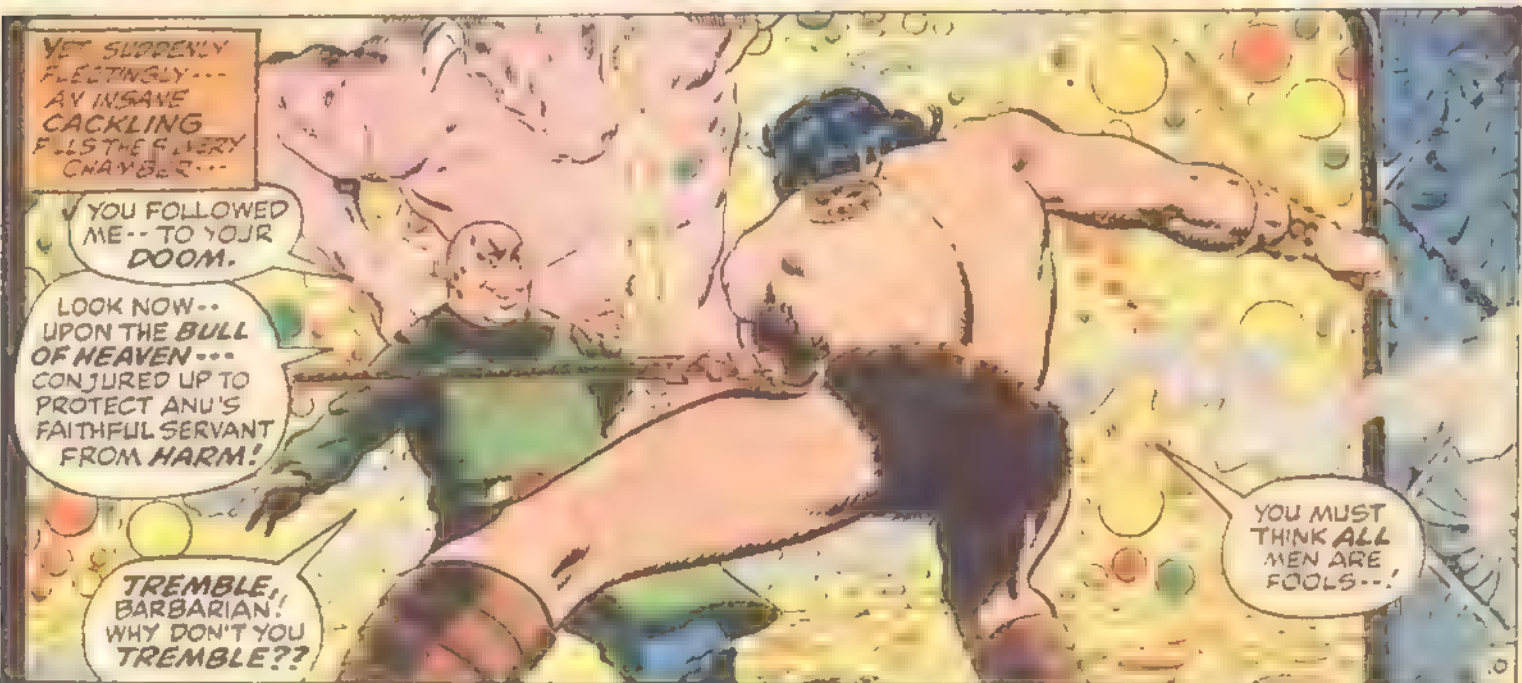


THEN, PRAYERS GIVE  
WAY TO AN OMINOUS  
INCANTATION --- A  
BRIEF, OBSCENE  
RITUAL MURMURED  
TWICE IN RECENT  
DAYS---

--AND THIS  
TIME MOST  
DESPERATELY--



FOR HARD UPON  
A WHEEL COMES  
GLINT-LODGED  
DEATH!



YET SUDDENLY  
FLEETINGLY ---  
AN INSANE  
CACKLING  
FILLS THE VERY  
CHAMBER---

YOU FOLLOWED  
ME-- TO YOUR  
DOOM.

LOOK NOW--  
UPON THE BULL  
OF HEAVEN ---  
CONJURED UP TO  
PROTECT ANU'S  
FAITHFUL SERVANT  
FROM HARM!

TREMBLE,  
BARBARIAN!  
WHY DON'T YOU  
TREMBLE??

YOU MUST  
THINK ALL  
MEN ARE  
FOOLS---

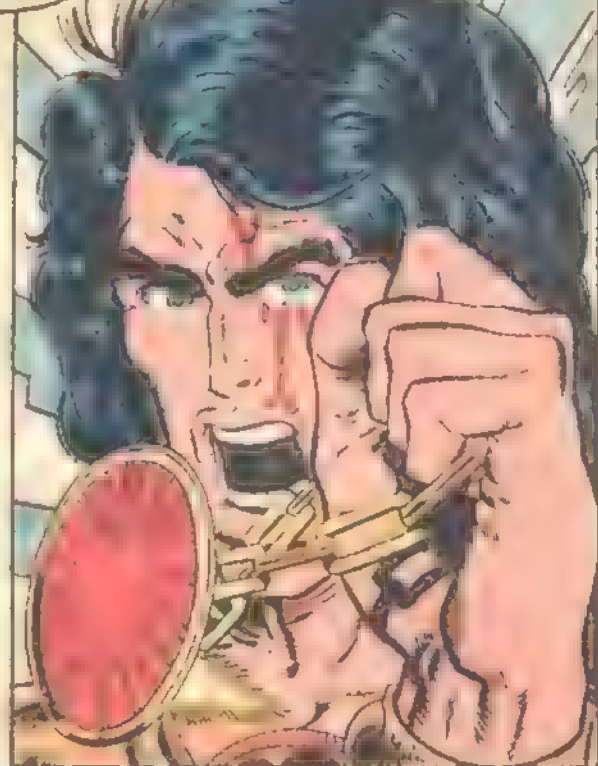


DON'T YOU THINK  
I **WATCHED** YOU  
BEFORE-- FINGER-  
ING THAT **TRINKET**  
ABOUT YOUR FAT  
NECK?



I THINK **YOU**  
HAVE NO MORE  
POWER OVER  
THAT DEVIL-  
SPAWN THAN  
**I DO...**

-- WHEN YOU'RE  
NOT WEARING--  
**THIS!**

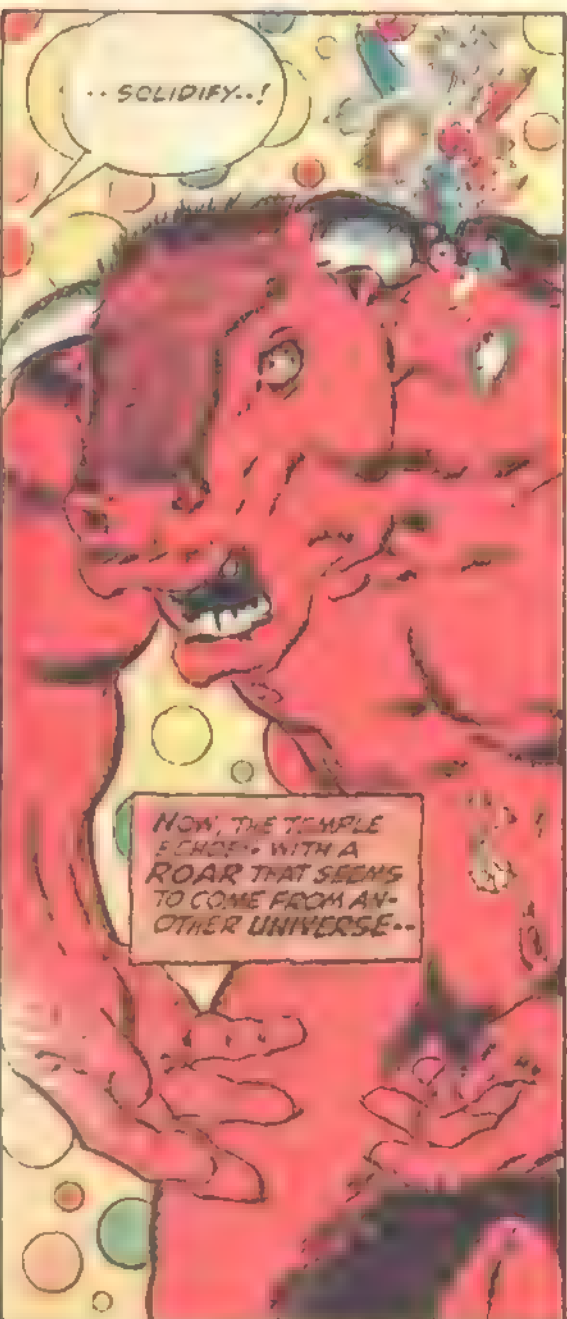


M-MY  
**AMULET!**  
DURING OUR  
STRUGGLES  
--YOU TOOK--  
MY AMULET.



BUT-- THAT  
IS MY  
**SHIELD..**  
MY PRO-  
TECTION.

IF-- IF I  
DO NOT  
WEAR IT--  
THE **BULL**  
OF ANU  
WILL...

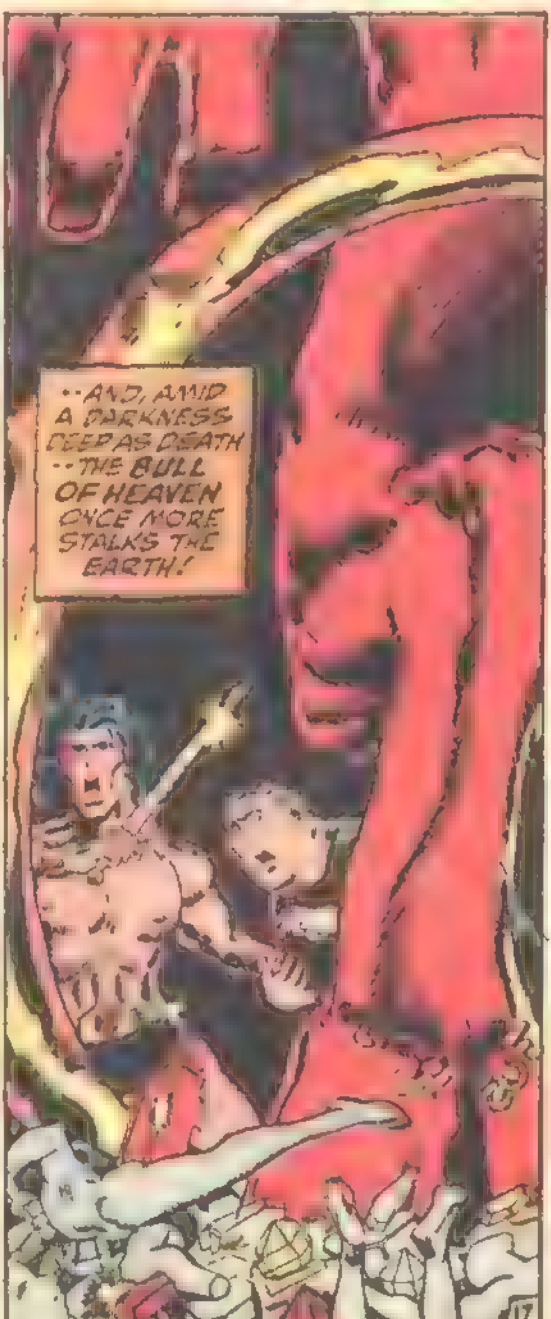


... **SOLIDIFY..!**

NOW, THE TEMPLE  
ECHOES-- WITH A  
ROAR THAT SEEMS  
TO COME FROM AN-  
OTHER UNIVERSE--

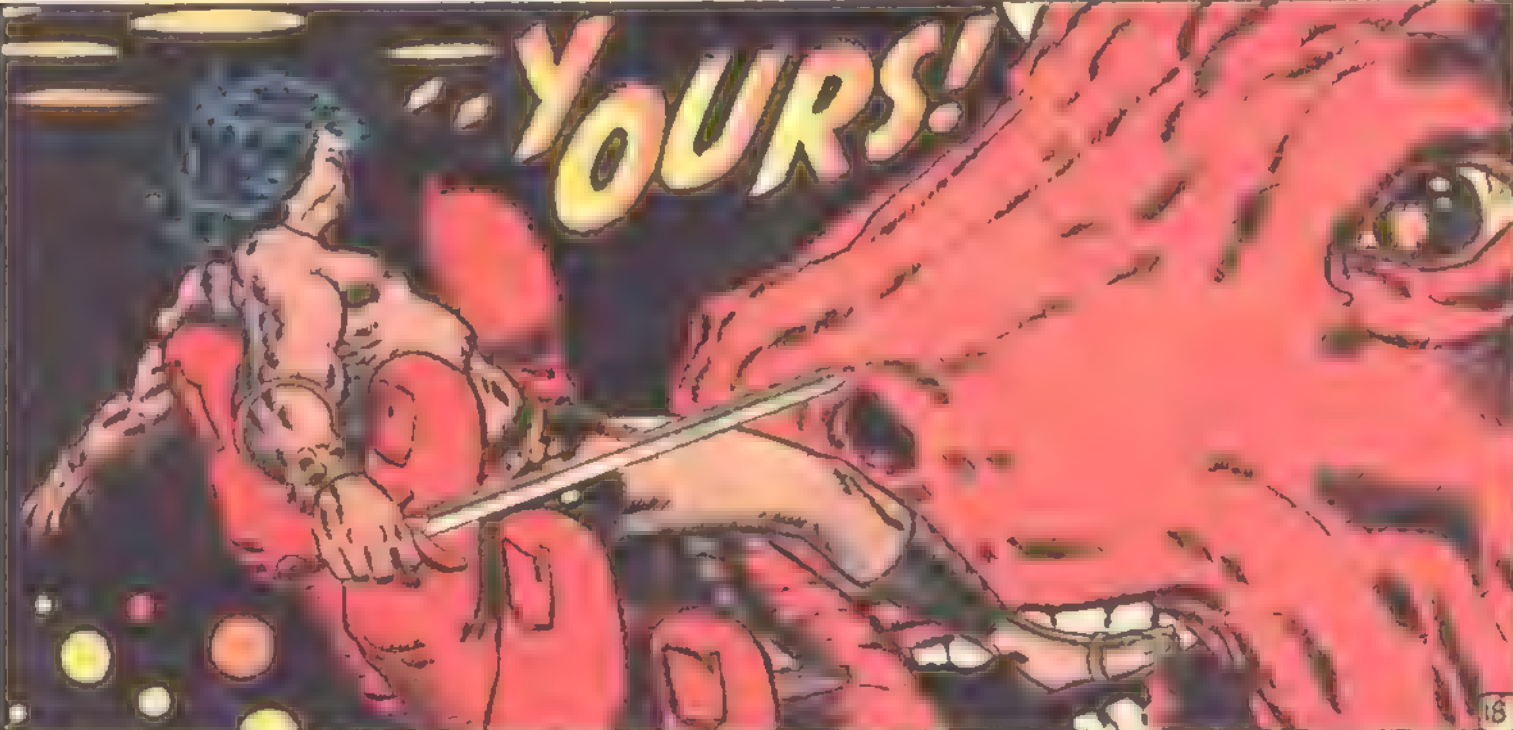
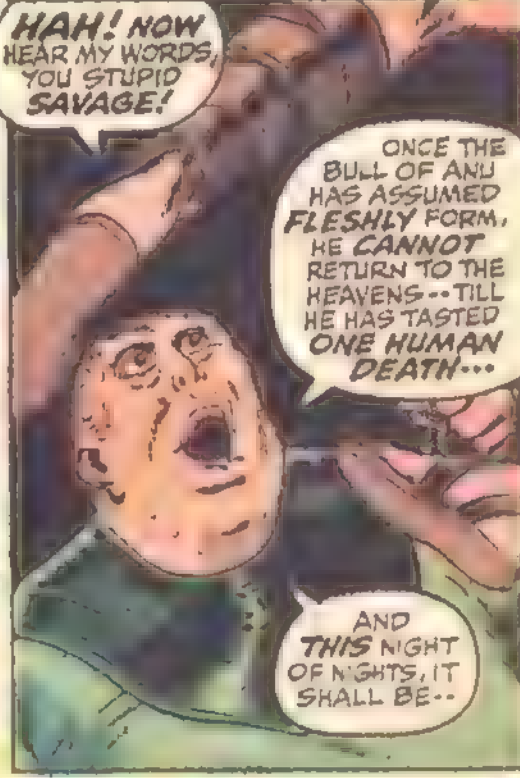
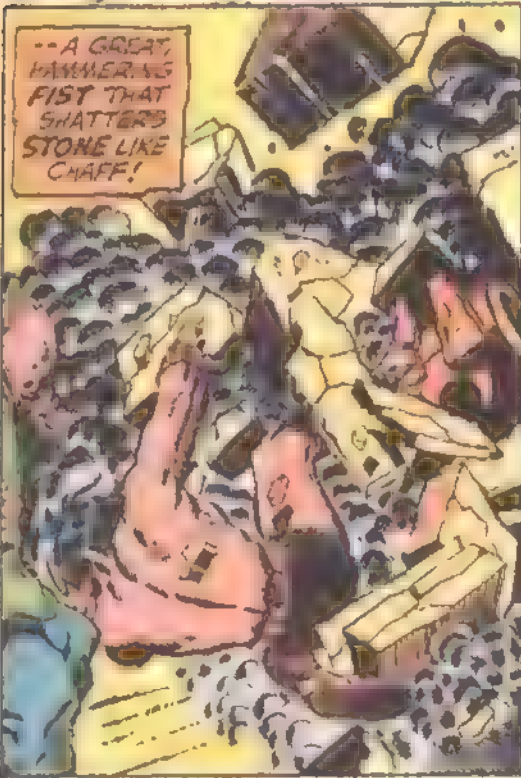
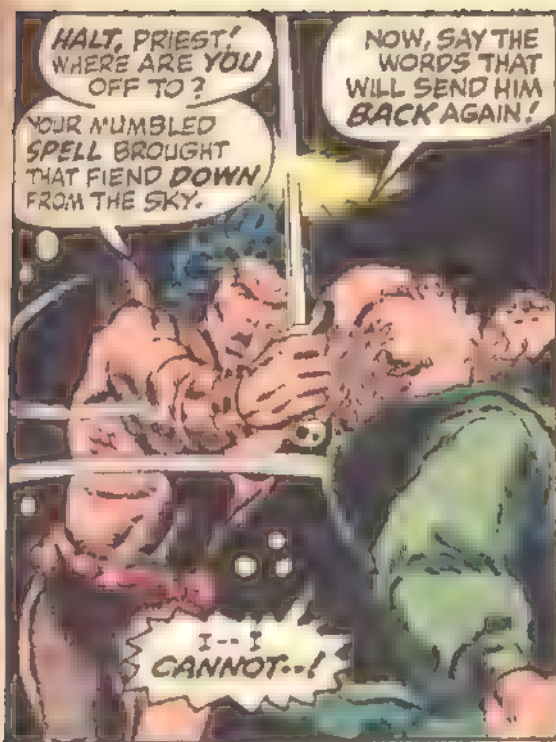


-- AS THE HOWLING  
BEAST-THING TENSES  
SKY-BORN THEWS...  
AND THE GLOWING  
JEWEL-FILLAR  
SHATTERS LIKE A  
GAUDY GLASS BAUBLE--

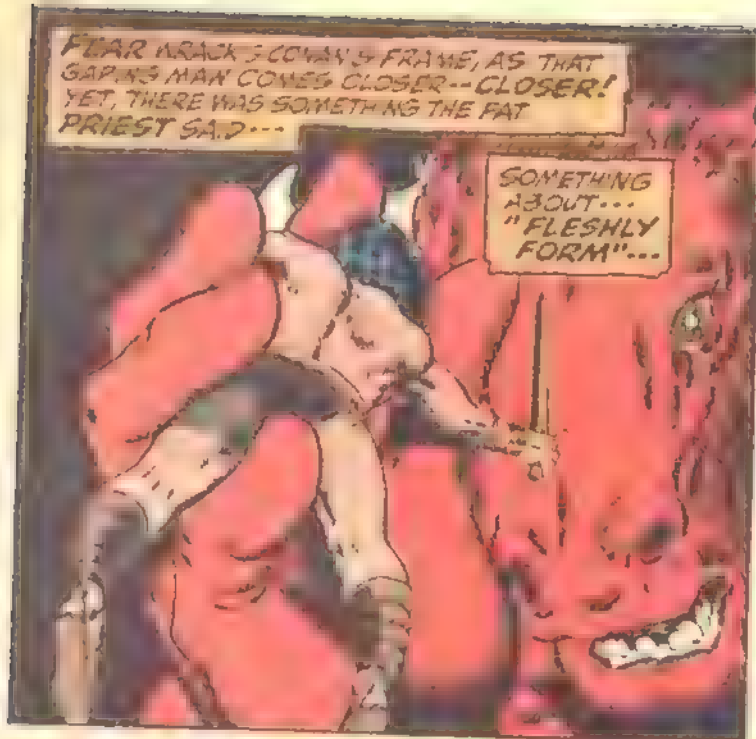


--AND, AND  
A DARKNESS  
DEEP AS DEATH  
--THE **BULL**  
OF HEAVEN  
ONCE MORE  
STALKS THE  
EARTH!



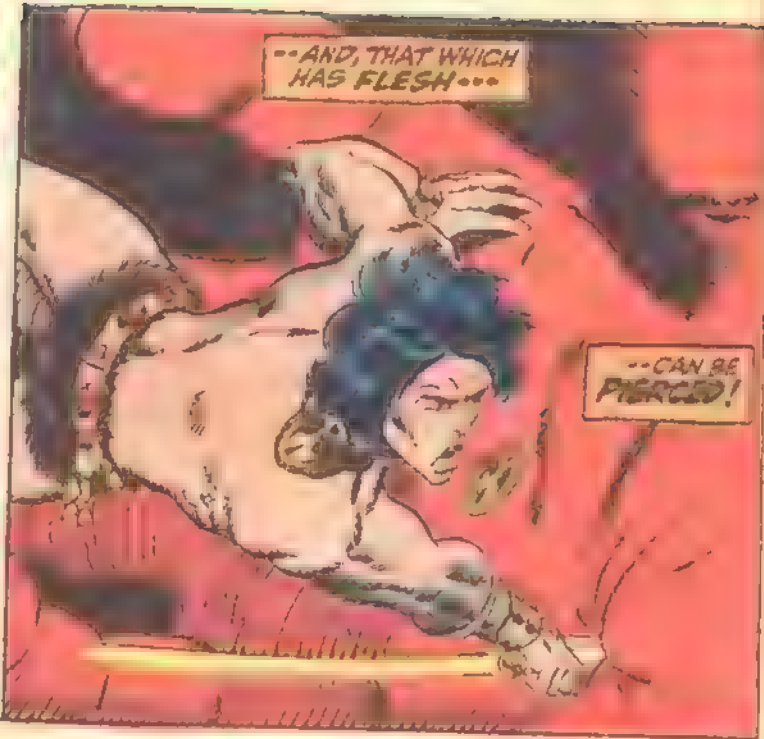






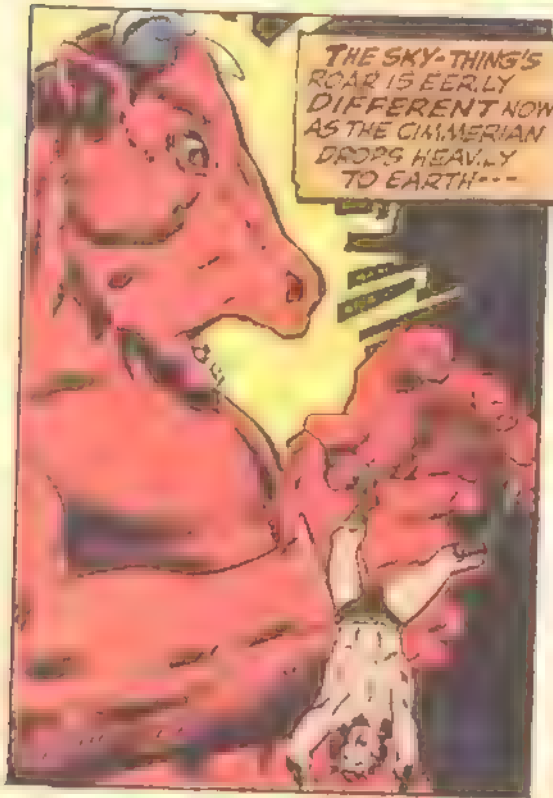
FEAR CRACKS COWAN'S FRAME, AS THAT GAPING MAN COMES CLOSER--CLOSER! YET, THERE WAS SOMETHING THE FAT PRIEST SAID---

SOMETHING ABOUT... "FLESHLY FORM"...

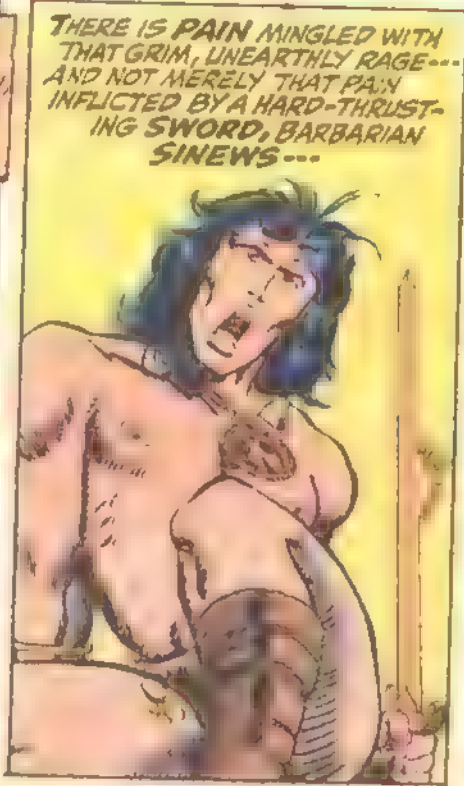


--AND, THAT WHICH HAS FLESH---

--CAN BE PIERCED!



THE SKY-THING'S ROAR IS EERILY DIFFERENT NOW, AS THE CIMMERIAN DROPS HEAVILY TO EARTH---



THERE IS PAIN MINGLED WITH THAT GRIM, UNEARTHLY RAGE--- AND NOT MERELY THAT PAIN INFLICTED BY A HARD-THRUSTING SWORD, BARBARIAN SINEWS---



---BUT THE AWESOME AGONY OF ONE WHOSE BIRTHPLACE WAS A STAR--- ONE WHO HAS BEEN LINTIME- LY RIPPED FROM OUT THE FIRMAMENT---



--TO WHICH HE CAN ONLY RETURN-- ADRIPT ON A RIVER OF BLOOD!

STOP HIM! STOP HIM! H-HE'S TURNING THIS WAY AGAIN!

MY BLADE IS A BEE-STING TO HIM--AND THAT IS ALL!

HE CRAVES A HUMAN LIFE... NOTHING LESS.



WELL, IF HAVE ONE HE MUST--



..IT WON'T BE MINE!

NNOO





EYES  
AFLAME,  
THE GOD-  
BULL  
GLARES  
DOWN--

--DOWN AT THE SQUIRMING,  
NOW-FEARFUL MANLING WHO  
HAS HELD HIM PRISONER  
FOR SO MANY YEARS---



--AND IT BEGINS TO EXACT  
ITS PAYMENT!



FOR A MOMENT, AS HE DIGGS HIS  
WAY THRU THE RUBBLE WHICH KEEPS  
HIM FROM THE CITY STREETS, CONAN  
FEELS A SURGE OF PITY FOR THE  
FRAIL, OVERFED PRIEST---

THEN, HE  
RECALLS  
THE FATE OF  
BURGUN--

---AND HE KEEPS ON DIGGING.



BUT, 'TIS ONLY HIS FORMER TOR-  
MENTOR WHICH SEEMS TO CONCERN  
THE BELLOWING BEHEMOTH NOW---

---AS THE  
GROSS  
ROGUE IS  
LIFTED  
SCREAM-  
ING OVER-  
HEAD---



-- THEN DROPPED, LIKE A SACK  
OF OLD, DISCARDED BONES.



THEN, AS THE  
DYING PRIEST  
WRITHES FIT-  
FULLY, PAIN-  
FULLY AMONGST  
FALLEN STONE  
AND MORTAR---

--THE MONSTER  
TURNS--TOWARD  
CONAN.

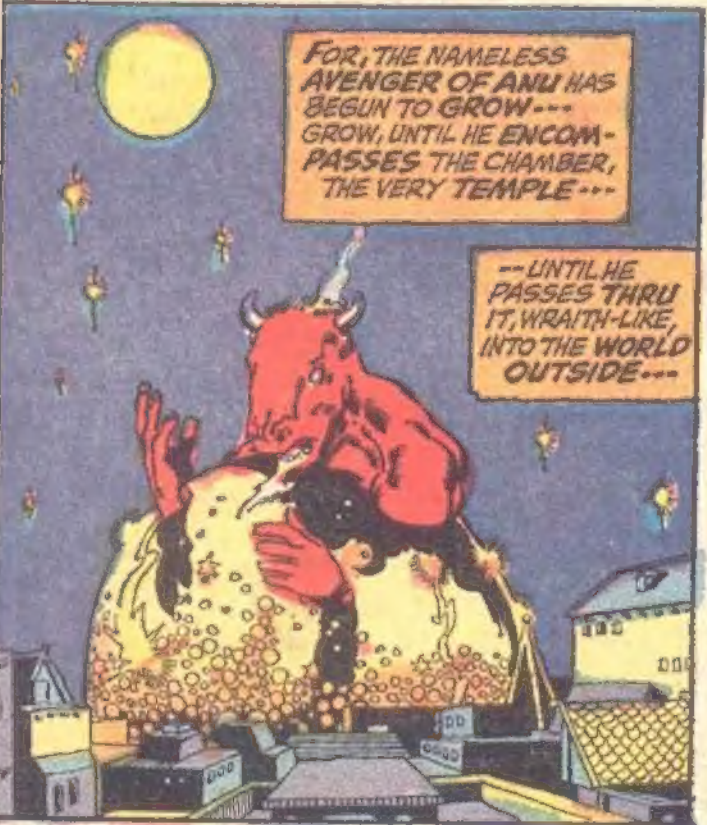




FOR ONE SPINE-SHIVERING MOMENT, DEMON AND BAR-BARIAN GAZE AT EACH OTHER-- THE HOT BREATH OF DOOM BATHES CONAN'S TENSED FORM---



THEN, HIS EYES WIDEN --- THOSE EYES THAT HAVE BEHELD A THOUSAND HORRORS, YET NONE MORE FRIGHTFUL THAN THIS---



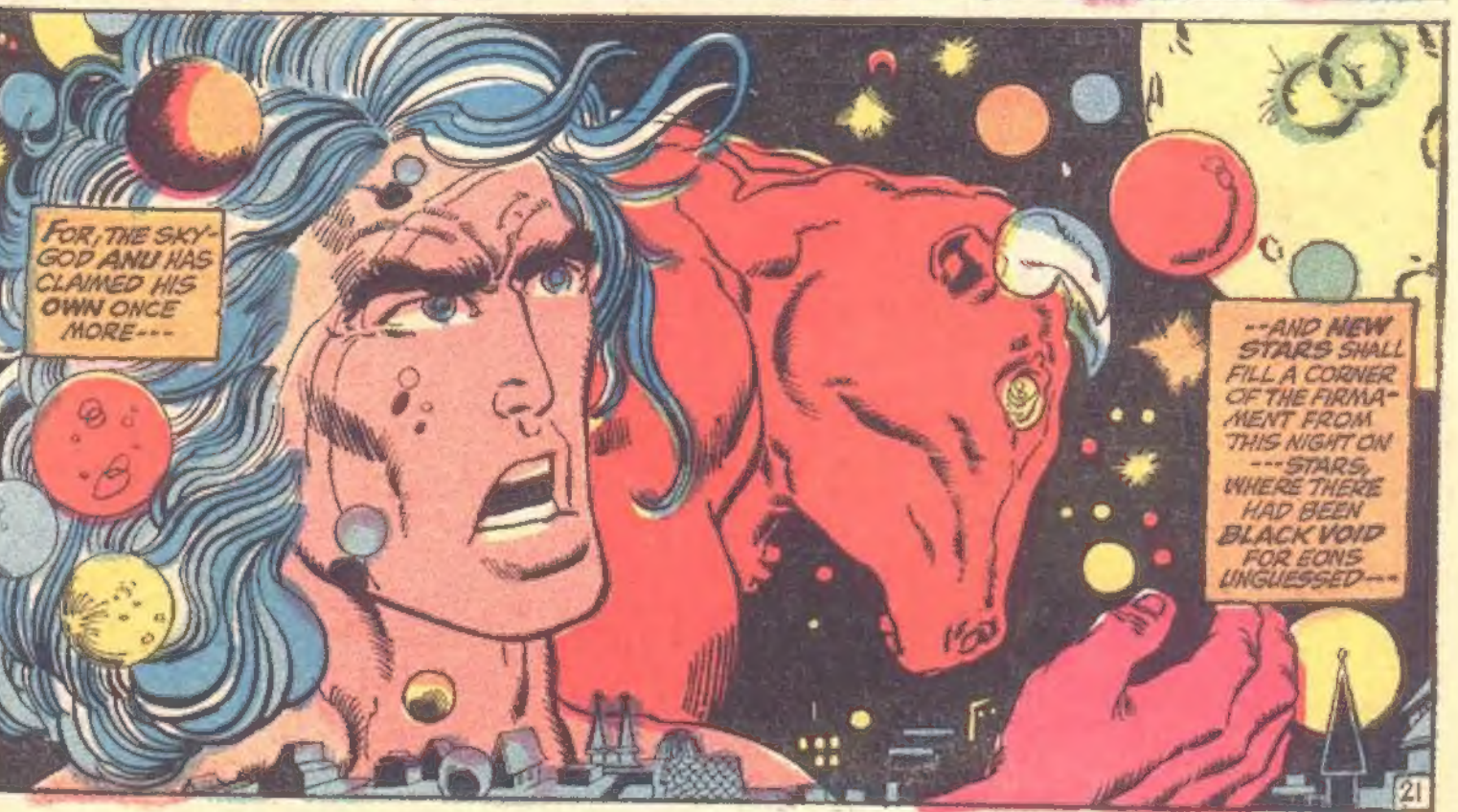
FOR, THE NAMELESS AVENGER OF ANU HAS BEGUN TO GROW--- GROW, UNTIL HE ENCOMPASSES THE CHAMBER, THE VERY TEMPLE---

-- UNTIL HE PASSES THRU IT, WRAITH-LIKE, INTO THE WORLD OUTSIDE---



-- AYE, UNTIL HIS GREAT ARMS CLAW HEAVENWARD, AS HE UTTERS ONE FINAL, SOUL-SHATTERING ROAR---

-- THEN IS GONE, AS IF HE NEVER WERE!



FOR, THE SKY-GOD ANU HAS CLAIMED HIS OWN ONCE MORE---

-- AND NEW STARS SHALL FILL A CORNER OF THE FIRMAMENT FROM THIS NIGHT ON --- STARS, WHERE THERE HAD BEEN BLACK VOID FOR EONS UNGUESSED---



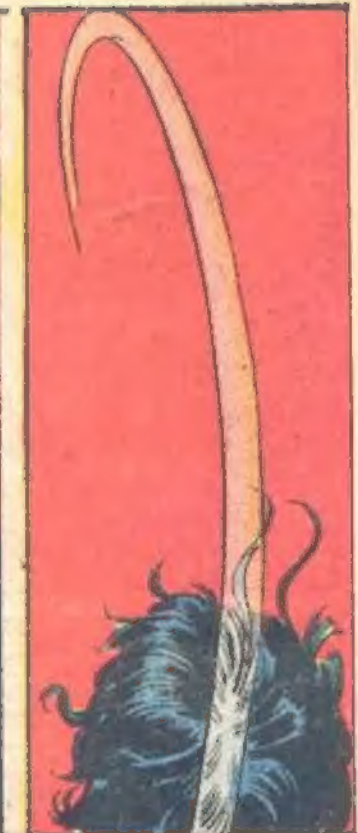


AS...

M-MERCY--



MER--



A QUICK  
DEATH,  
PRIEST...

-- IS MERCY OF  
A SORT.



STILL, ONE  
THING IS YET  
TO DO.



THIEVES' END, SOME  
CALL IT--OTHERS, SIMPLY  
THE GALLOW-SQUARE--



THE BODIES OF EXECUTED  
MEN HAVE BEEN KNOWN  
TO DISAPPEAR, AND SO  
THE SQUARE IS GUARDED  
ON SUCH EVENINGS AS  
THIS...



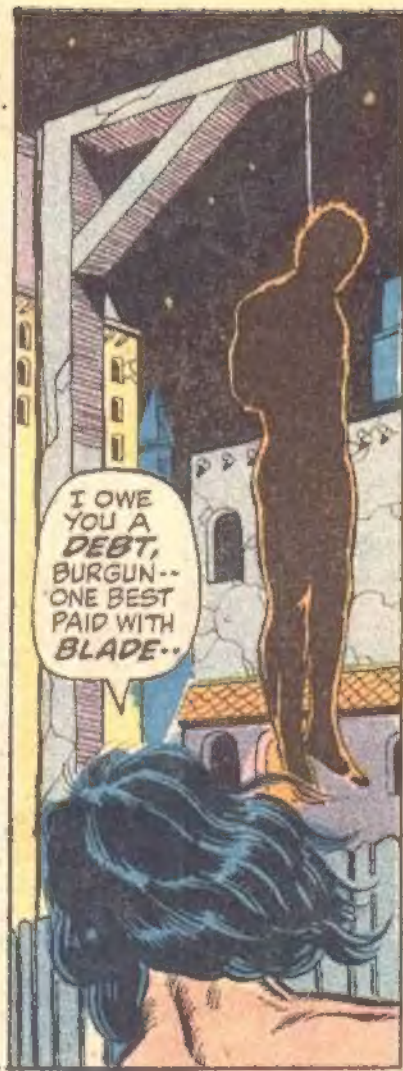
...TONIGHT, BY THE VERY ONE  
WHO SPRUNG THE TRAP THIS  
MORNING...



HIS LAST  
SUCH ACT, AS  
IT HAPPENS!



I OWE  
YOU A  
DEBT,  
BURGUN--  
ONE BEST  
PAID WITH  
BLADE--



--WITH FLINT--



--AND  
WITH  
FIRE!



FINALLY, AN INSTANT OF  
RESISTANCE AT THE CITY  
GATE-- A RESISTANCE MOST  
SEVERELY, MOST SAVAGELY  
MET--



YET, NO RIVER OF BLOOD CAN  
WASH AWAY THE ACHE, THE EMPTI-  
NESS WHICH HOVERS AT CONAN'S  
SHOULDER--

--AND NO  
DUNGEON  
WHICH LOOMS  
IN CONAN'S  
UNGLIMPSED  
FUTURE CAN  
EVER REAVE HIS  
BARBARIAN'S  
HEART--



--LIKE THE DEATH  
OF A FRIEND  
BETRAYED--!

Finis